

International  
Support  
Policies  
to  
South-East  
European  
Countries

Lessons  
(Not)  
Learned  
In

## CHAPTER XII

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#### MEDIA IN B-H – THE SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

##### Introduction

The past war (1992–1995) stopped the development of the media and almost destroyed the media infrastructure in B-H. Most of the media became a propaganda tool of the authorities, the military and other power centers that were created in the dissected territory of B-H. The Belgrade and Zagreb media houses competed in the territory of B-H for the interests of their States. A small number of media managed to retain (or win) their independent orientation. Three technical, program and status-divided RTV systems were created, under the influence of national oligarchies on the territories that were conquered (or retained) through military actions. Such a division left its mark on the state of the information system following the war.

The international community was deeply involved in the stabilization and development of the media scene following the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). Almost all measures that arose from the letter and spirit of the GFAP were tested on the media. Few vocations in B-H were under such scrutiny as the media. Thus, the international community is greatly responsible for the renewal and reconstruction of the media that was carried out in the interest of peace and democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This analysis will firstly provide an overview of the development and current state of the media sphere and demonstrate the post-Dayton politically legal framework of the media. It will follow on to provide the motive, forms and effects of international intervention. The conclusion aims to inspire thought on – where and how from here on.

##### 1. The Media Explosion and Stabilization

At the beginning of 2001, 210 radio stations and 71 television stations emitted their programs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Approximately 130 newspapers, magazines, journals and periodicals were published. Among them six daily papers (three in Sarajevo and two in Banja Luka) and 20 weeklies. Their circulation was small however (all six daily papers were printed in about 60 to 80 thousand copies daily). There were six news agencies, of which four had daily services (two from Sarajevo, one each from Mostar and Banja Luka)<sup>1</sup>.

The media explosion had already begun during the war. Of the 54 radio stations and 5 TV stations that existed in 1991, the number rose to 156 radio stations and 52 TV stations in 1997. The cause of this expansion can be found above all in the fact that radio, and particularly television, were, both before and after the war, a very important weapon in the ethnic (nationalist), political and military propaganda. This expansion was favored by the end of the administrative ban on private bodies establishing media houses, and the chaotic state in the use of the frequency spectrum. There were no program or technical standards in its use. Of course, the international community had a positive influence on the media explosion and one that could not be neglected. Through vast donations, it supported the establishment of numerous media of independent orientation, in particular of radio and TV stations. The aim of this intervention was to create a pluralist media scene that would weaken the influence of the State, i.e. party, media. Minor local profiteers, who knew how to convert into money their verbal advocacy for democracy and freedom of the media found a niche in such a, more or less, uncontrolled media explosion.

The media development in B-H can be divided into a number of phases over the past five years. The first phase is the immediate post-war period, when, following the end of military operations, the media continued their verbal war. The language of hate ruled within the State

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<sup>1</sup> See more on [www.mediaonline.ba](http://www.mediaonline.ba), *Media at the turning point – A media picture of B-H (Mediji na prekretnici - Medijska slika BiH)*, 2001.

media, and the newly developed media of independent orientation found it difficult to retain their function. The media area was parceled and divided. The international factor oversaw the State media, but its effect in eliminating the language of hate was minor.

The second phase, which began immediately prior to the first post-war elections in the fall of 1996 was characterized by the establishment of a number of local media, independent of the politics of local authorities with the immense assistance of foreign donors. OHR and OSCE installed two large international projects in Bosnia – OBN television and Radio FERN, with the aim of making them a deciding influence on the creation of a more favorable democratic environment for the elections. The Belgrade and Zagreb media continued to have a propaganda influence in the media space in B-H. Programs in the local languages of West European countries (Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, France Internationale, Free Europe) started to appear on most of the local radio stations supported by the international community. On the basis of entitlements for Sintra, the High Representative for the first time applied one sanction on the media – SFOR took over the transmitters of Srpska RTV from Pale, while the seat of that television station was transferred to the more cooperative part of the Republika Srpska - Banja Luka.

The third phase of change in the media picture was the beginning of the transformation of State radio and TV stations into public services. This process was initiated in 1998 but has not yet been completed. It was imposed, by his decisions and laws, by the High Representative, following unsuccessful attempts by the local authorities, the management and editorships of existing State RTV stations, to carry this out. It was planned that there would be two public Entity radio and TV stations and a Public Service for all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was also noted that the media expansion was not paralleled by quality. The international community began to invest large amounts of money into the education of journalists. The Independent Media Commission was established, as the head regulatory body in the field of radio diffusion (in March 2001, the Commission was integrated into the Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications that, under the supervision and management of foreigners, acts at the State level). It finally ended the illegally established system of the Croatian Radio Television in the Federation of B-H, i.e. the subsidiary of Croatian Radio Television from Zagreb. The language of hate, in its direct sense, has disappeared from most of the media.

The final phase, which is underway, can be called the *intention for stabilization*, even though the effects of this intention are only partly visible. The international community has made a sharp turn in the support to media and is giving priority to the transformation of State electronic services, so that their untouched power during all the post-war years was now aimed at a greater effect in creating a democratic environment. At the same time, it ends the support it gave to international projects - OBN and FERN. The first was given to its local staff to manage it to the best of their abilities, while the other, with its staff and technical resources, was included in the newly established Public Radio B-H (BiH radio 1). In this phase, OHR and OSCE worked on the establishment of media legislation, in order to fix the chaotic situation in the media field, caused by the breakdown of the former State, the war and political obstruction of leading parties following the war. In the absence of political will of authorities in adopting adequate laws, OSCE developed proposals for laws regarding free access to information and libel, which are currently in the adoption procedure, and which should bring European standards of behavior into these fields.<sup>2</sup>

In this current phase, the international community has initiated a new type of campaign for sustainability in the B-H media. Donations were drastically cut and the media that had survived on them found themselves on the brink of extinction. The media market had not begun to function, and most of the media were not qualified for even its rudimentary prospects. The Regulatory Agency for Telecommunication applied strong rules for renewal, i.e. the provision of long-term work permits. In the Tuzla region alone, 43 of the 63 radio and TV stations did not receive permits. Through the application of these criteria, it was possible to reduce the number of radio and TV stations by two thirds. Their current number still exceeds the possibilities and needs of public interest, public information and advertising, but in this situation it is possible that stations

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<sup>2</sup> See more on [www.oscebih.org](http://www.oscebih.org)

that had a significant influence on the establishment of a democratic atmosphere in certain parts of the country may disappear from the air and press.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship of local authorities towards the media underwent two phases. The authorities, primarily out of nationalist interests, obstructed each action of the international community and thus blocked the entire process. They had a hold on "their" media, while the opposition and media of independent orientation were dubbed non-patriotic and antagonistic. During the second phase, during which the last elections of November 2000 were held, the authorities retreated into a state of quiet obstruction and disinterest for the processes developing in the media. Thus the political obstruction of authorities, as well as the apathetic atmosphere, the lack of understanding and resistance in the State electronic media, led the international factors to mainly make foreigners responsible for their reconstruction. The international community did not find a way to identify and support reform initiatives within the local forces. In this way a kind of semi-protectorate was introduced into the media field, although none of the international factors admit to this.

## 2. The GFAP Framework for the Media

The international media intervention mainly arose from the spirit, rather than the letter, of the GFAP. In fact, the Agreement, and, within its framework, the Constitution of B-H, hardly mentions anything about the media. It is only Article I.I. of Annex 10, that mentions the creation of a positive environment for holding elections, that states that "parties will ensure ... freedom of expression and press". The Constitution of B-H does not mention the media, within the jurisdiction of the State, not even those media that provide State identity – the State or public radio and television. Only indirectly, in Article III, Point 1 of the Constitution, where the jurisdiction of the B-H institutions are numbered, is the duty for "establishing and functioning of joint and international communications" mentioned. This formulation could be interpreted as the obligation of the State to regulate the issue of RTV frequencies, i.e. certain aspects of radio diffusion. The media were left to the jurisdiction of the Entities. In the FB-H, they were even further subordinated to the jurisdiction of the Canton. The logic of the Washington Treaty (1993), that led to the formation of the FB-H, was the same as that of the Dayton agreement – the media belong to the conflicting "sides". The "sides" fought for them in the war and have a right to them in peacetime.

The witnesses of the birth of the Agreement on Dayton do not remember and do not mention whether there was talk of the media there at all. It could be supposed that the media did not fall under the priorities for which an agreement had to be reached. It definitely suited the local protagonists to dominate such a lethal weapon after the war. Dayton secured the same starting point for the media intervention of the international community, as well as for military and political intervention: separating the warring sides (media), and continuing work on renewal and reconstruction with their war mentors. Thus it was made possible that during the first postwar years, Momčilo Krajišnik (now in the Hague) and Velibor Ostojić (now missing), continued to manage the Srpska Radio Television, while the strongest propaganda actors of the Tudjman regime remained on air, the so called Radio-Television of Herceg Bosna. RTV B-H which had the greatest feeling for the spirit and sense of the GFAP was not taken out of the hands of the nationalists in the Bosniac SDA on time. This is the brutal truth about the legalization of media apartheid, which neither the international community nor the local factors has eliminated to date. The international community later on gave a flexible interpretation to the spirit of the Constitution, but the incomplete, compromising and illogical solutions related to the media never allowed for the constituting of a consistent media development strategy in B-H.

The Peace Implementation Council undertook the duty to interpret the Agreement and to provide the High Representative with mostly pragmatic jurisdiction based on which they and other international factors could intervene in B-H. During the five years following the war, neither the international community nor any of its institutions engaged in B-H produced a comprehensive,

<sup>3</sup> See more on [www.mediaonline.ba](http://www.mediaonline.ba), *Permits only to professional and solvent media (Dozvole samo profesionalnim i solventnim medijima)*, 2000.

scientific, political, technological and economically based strategic document about the development of the media in this country. At the same time, there were issued thousands of conclusions, opinions, evaluations, guidelines, directives and decisions from various sources, which would often repeat themselves, contradict one other, and serve as methodological examples of inconsistent planning.

Media were a topic at almost all of the Peace Implementation Council sessions (25 meetings had been held by April 2001).<sup>4</sup> These were the main foundations for media intervention by the international community. In Sintra, (May 1997), for the first time answers were provided to the questions of, what to do about media that continue to spread war propaganda ("the High Representative can suspend any media network whose program is in constant opposition to the spirit and letter of the Peace Agreement"). The directive to establish an Independent Media Commission that would regulate the state of electronic media was given in Bonn. The Madrid Conference (December 1998) contains the most comprehensive framework for this intervention. Named the Media Reform, the document from this conference supports the high Representative in his activities in transforming the State media into public services, requires of the donor countries to assist in the work of the Independent Media Commission, stimulates the adoption of media laws in both Entities, requires of the Croatian RTV and TV Serbia to respect international emitting norms, supports OSCE and IMC in bringing about clear election rules regarding media behavior. For the first time, an international organ expresses a critical position regarding the method of functioning of foreign assistance to media through the position that it is necessary to establish stricter criteria for donations. TV OBN and Radio Fern were then still considered to be the main factors having a media influence on the population, so full donor support was required for their financing.

Since 1998, the High Representative started working on media reform based on these jurisdictions. However, the first attempt at receiving support from the three leaders of ethnic parties situated in the Presidency was a debacle. One member (the Serb representative Momčilo Krajišnik) did not sign the signed Memorandum on Cooperation regarding this issue, while the other two did everything to stall the process. Therefore, in July 1999, the High Representative decided to impose a number of regulations, establishing a Public Service at the State and FB-H levels, while RTV Srpska was ordered to change its name to TV Republika Srpska and undertake its reconstruction towards European standards. The persistent attempt to achieve an agreement on reform with the opponents of the idea of reform of the media never had results. When this became evident, the international community virtually "kicked" the local factors "out of the game" and itself started to create laws and to impose them as being valid, knowing that the local authorities would never adopt them while their mandate was running.

### **3. Motives, Forms and Effects of Intervention**

The international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina was engaged through the international institutions responsible for the implementation of the peace agreement - OHR, OSCE, SFOR, UN and its agencies, the European Union and the Council of Europe. The Office of the High Representative had jurisdiction within the development of new systems of radio broadcasting, the establishment of regulatory bodies, the reconstruction of the State TV network and announcement of media laws. OSCE worked on the behavior of media in pre-election activities, the protection of journalists' rights and freedoms and, in accordance with this, worked on the preparation of adequate laws. Work on the education of journalists was notable, support to professional and union organization, as well as assistance to threatened journalists (Free Media - SOS telephone for assistance to journalists).

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) was established through a special decision of the High Representative. It was led by foreign experts and was part of a form of para-State institutions with international community jurisdiction. SFOR organized propaganda campaigns for its mission, established the radio station Radio Mir (Peace), and provided assistance to media at

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<sup>4</sup> See more on [www.ohr.int](http://www.ohr.int)



the local level. Of the private and non-governmental organizations, the most noted role was played by Soros, i.e. the Open Society Foundation B-H.

Almost every West European country was involved in donor programs through their international development agencies or non-governmental foundations. According to data of the Media Plan Institute Sarajevo, 20 offices of different organizations working with B-H media were in function in Sarajevo in 1997. This trend of interest for the B-H media situation was kept by all until 1999, until the start of the Kosovo and Serbian crises. The sudden fall of interest came, not because the work in B-H was completed, but because the global machinery of military, political and media intervention began to move to another crisis area.

It is incontestable that the aims of international community intervention in the media field were significant for enabling sustainable democratic development of the B-H society. Support to free media, the pluralization of media space, freedom from pressure and manipulation of the authorities and politics, the creation of modern media legislation together with the application of global standards, the transition of State electronic media into public services – these were the aims that absorbed the creators of policies in the media sphere. However, the methods used by the international community were truly interventionist, mostly based on pragmatic decisions and campaigns that aimed to give quick, large results, whose success was, at least publicly, rarely analyzed. Even though interventionism was necessary, in particular directly after the war, as well as in certain later instances, the absence of readiness to work on a long-term and stable strategic project for media development represents the greatest weakness of the action of international factors in the B-H media sphere.

Below we present the most active forms of international community engagement in the establishment of a democratic environment in B-H.

### **3.1. Support to the Establishment and Work of Free Media**

The international community assessed that the propaganda role of electronic networks in the Entities will best be warded off through providing financial and technical assistance for establishing new media and sustaining media that have demonstrated their independent orientation. Between 1995 and 1997, 66 new media were created, of which 57 were new radio and TV stations. According to ICG data, 25,200,000 DEM were spent on local media in 1996.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that in that year, an additional 10 million DEM were donated by other organizations whose head offices were not registered in Sarajevo.

The greatest donors were the European Union, Soros, and USAID. The European Union donated 33,249,000 DEM to the development of media between 1995 and 2000. USAID gave 74 million DEM for the same needs. Soros invested 7,583,000 DEM to support for the media over seven years (1993 – 1999). During 2000, it abandoned the program of direct assistance to media, selecting instead regional programs and more sophisticated socially active activities in the field of communication.

When the invested resources of the largest donors are added, with the assumption that the other smaller donors annually invested an additional five million DEM, it can be concluded that 135 million DEM were invested during the five post-war years. The absence of international coordination and lack of transparency of the sources of information do not allow us to regard this sum as definite. The sum may even be greater, since it was impossible to decide how much of the resources spent on OBN were included in this sum (according to certain estimates, this may be 40 million DEM). If donations for this international project are truly a part of these 135 million DEM, one can deduce that only one project spent almost one third of the money intended for the local media.

Estimates as to whom to give donations to were almost without exception in the hands of foreign organizations. (Apart from the Open Society Fund B-H which entrusted this work to local experts). It is simply incomprehensible that translators and often otherwise unqualified local staff in international organizations became the advisors and evaluators of the media situation. It is only within the projects that the Stability Pact started to coordinate, that part of the jurisdiction for

<sup>5</sup> See more in [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org)

proposing beneficiaries of donations was transferred to local partners (regional media networks that are supported by the French and Danish Governments). Certain organizations, such as the European Union, underwent a lengthy process for approval of donations (even up to two years from time of application) so that certain interventions became inappropriate or, because of discrepancies in the dynamics of the influx of resources, difficult to implement.

Nonetheless, the result of these activities is significant. The media monopoly of the State media was destroyed and a plural media environment created. But the entire project was carried out as a campaign, without enough coordination between donors, and this enabled certain manipulation among the beneficiaries. A concrete coherent plan of needs was never made, so the media arose spontaneously, like mushrooms, on the basis of the donors' superficial insight into the abilities of beneficiaries and worth of frequently improvised projects. Due to this lax implementation, a good intention into which large amounts of money were invested turned into a disease which now burdens the media situation in B-H. Numerous media with inexperienced and insufficiently professional staff, a donor behavior logic, and management which was unprepared for its appearance on the media market as well as a program which was not attractive to the ever-more selective audience, now find themselves before closure through the application of the new regulatory rules.<sup>6</sup> Media that, until yesterday, the international community invested large amounts of money into, may fall as well, e.g. Radio and TV Tuzla, Zetel in Zenica, Studio 99; or they may face enormous difficulties in surmounting market barriers, such as is the case for the Sarajevo "Oslobođenje" and "Večernje novine" ("Jutarnje novine") which the international community supported for a lengthy period as supporters of free journalism.

### 3.2. Installing Foreign Projects

TV OBN and Radio Fern, both founded in 1996, were the greatest hopes of the international community for quick democratic change, the breakdown of communication barriers and tolerance and trust building. Leaving the central media under the authorities or the influence of the creators of war, the international community quickly understood that State media could not be an ally in the implementation of peace, so it decided to install its own projects. In time, OBN and FERN truly became media that introduced a new light into media communication; they broke down media barriers and became the first media to cover the entire country. However, action for the establishment of these networks was also a 'spur of the moment effort' (TV OBN started working seven days before the 1996 elections were held) with the ambition – which can be seen from today's perspective to have been totally frivolous – that in a couple of weeks of emitting programs, these media could eliminate the negative effect of nationalist propaganda created for more than five years.

In fact, in their approach of "their own" and "local projects", the international community made the greatest strategic mistake of all. Instead of concentrating efforts to immediately pull out the most influential media from under nationalist influences (Srpska RTV, RTV Herceg Bosna and RTV B-H) and assisting the creation of one overall Bosnian network, for two years it held them aside intending to create competition for them within international networks. Even in 1999, according to the research of the MarecolIndeks Bosnia agency, only 5.5 per cent of the population watched TV OBN regularly, while 3.6 per cent listened to radio FERN. In contrast to this, the two of the most watched television stations in B-H were RTV B-H (25.90%) and RTV RS (14.40 %).

Over the past five years, both projects underwent crises caused by the absence of a long-term development strategy and unclear legal status, out of which it could not be concluded who were the true, and who the formal, owners were. In essence, both networks never became a part of the local media environment, since they were intended to serve a missionary role, with which nothing could be done once their donations were cancelled or upon finishing their mission. The announced departure from the media scene of both projects (FERN has already entered the B-H public service system) also came as a consequence, in this area, of the conflicting interests of

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<sup>6</sup> See more on [www.imcbih.org](http://www.imcbih.org)

international donors. Europe gave precedence to the public service, while the USA preferred the concept of developing private media that would be able to fulfill part of the public functions.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3. Reconstruction of Public Media

These efforts definitely started late. Two important years in which there was some chance to drive the strong propaganda levers out of the hands of shaken-up nationalists in power, 1996 and 1997, were lost. Thus, the international movements became a sort of substitute for public service. The reform practically began in 1998, but so lackadaisically and without results that in 1999 the High Representative had to intervene with his decision. At this time, both State RTV stations (Sarajevo and Banja Luka) were no longer able to ensure a critical mass of knowledge and inventiveness to accept the letter and sense of the reform. Many good journalists and engineers had already abandoned these media houses, management had lost all vision for development and was completely obsessed with ethnic and Entity interests, while the financial situation was catastrophic. Within the reconstruction of State into public media, international organizations showed no interest to seek suggestions or support from local experts or institutions dealing with media that developed during the post-war years.<sup>8</sup> With their often unclear decisions and changes of reform concepts, the international factors created even more chaos and misunderstanding. They completely neglected the fact that before the war, what was then RTSA (RTV B-H) was part of one of the largest RTV systems in Europe and that its experts were able to assume the burden of developing a new radio television.

The reform of State into public services is being implemented without previously researching the economic, human and technical resources for this project. According to the dictates of political needs and ethnic divisions, the status, legal and organizational framework for the new public RTV networks was established first. Independent experts warn that B-H does not have economic and creative potential to sustain, in parallel, four public radio and TV networks.

This project has still not been completed.

### 3.4. Support to Professionalization

The education of journalists and other media staff, and the establishment of deontological rules were the basic forms of international assistance to increasing media professionalism. However, the international community was not able to simultaneously manage a number of parallel actions. New media projects were mostly not supported by education, which, right from the start, made these media insufficiently professional and less immune to potential influences of authorities.

A large education campaign was started in 1998. Tens of different West European training organizations and field groups hastily established by West European NGOs, simply flooded B-H media with training programs, which were often not up to the standards of European knowledge and experience. These hunters for donations targeting B-H stood in front of the doors of large donors in Europe, recommending their services for work on crisis regions, whereby the basic sense of their humanitarian engagement was often lost in favor of their own interests.

The "quick start" tactic was applied in this case as well. It was not well planned and was inadequate for B-H conditions. The principle of short, "flying" courses and training programs with insufficiently motivated participants and the "marketplace" approach of the implementers did not provide effects that were equal to the resources invested. Only two schools (the Soros Media Center and Media Plan Institute), which also assisted the international community, established long-term training programs that would last for a number of months at a time.

<sup>7</sup> According to a number of sources, which the Media Plan Institute relies on, 20 million dollars were invested into OBN (without revenues or advertisements), while the annual backing of FERN amount to 1 million dollars.

<sup>8</sup> For example, 9 of the 13 key people that, in 1984 developed and implemented what was then the largest media effort – covering the XIV Winter Olympics in Sarajevo still worked in Sarajevo in 1998.



The action for the professionalization of media through training programs best demonstrates how badly the transfer of knowledge between developed countries and B-H was carried out. Instead of the educators leaving local experts behind them, who would be capable of continuing the work, they mostly left without trace upon the expiry of donations, leaving an open space behind them. Instead of fully using local capacities and experts, they opened their offices, brought their experts and often provided training in those skills that local journalists already had or for whom local trained staff already existed. It is only recently that certain international organizations (e.g. IREX) have attempted to place their support for education into the wider context (university education, local educational centers, learning through work) or to support equal partnership relations (cooperation of journalist schools from Lile and Sarajevo).

### 3.5. The Fight Against the Language of Hate

This target was achieved with the most success. During the first year, tactics were played with the media and with nationalist authorities. The reactions of international factors came down to inefficient, tragicomic "statements of apology" that were written in the offices of OSCE and OHR, and were read upon directive in RTV station programs. A greater effect was achieved through the direct intervention on the basis of jurisdiction received by the High Representative (taking over the Srpska RTV transmitter and naming the international supervisor, banning work of illegal Croat RTV networks). However the most consistent pressure on the media to accept basic ethical rules of behavior came with the establishment of the Independent Media Commission (1998) which brought a code for managing the RTV program and press, established media monitoring and introduced sanctions for violations.

The language of hate has left its mark. Today it is seen indirectly in hidden forms, in particular on topics that evoke memories of the recent past. However, it is questionable as to how the request for balanced writing was understood by the media community. Certain media took it as a "do not create waves" call, to which certain foreign representatives demonstrated their affiliation. Thus the past could sometimes fall under a form of censure and numb the professional engagement of the media.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.6. Media Legislation

The chaotic state of media legislations, in fact the inexistence of any practically implementable law relating to the media, required the swift reaction of the international community. The international community, completely leaving out the media from the framework of the GFAP, was itself responsible for this chaos. This provided the Croat and Serb nationalists with the opportunity to answer every attempt at bringing order to the media situation at the State level with the attitude "that it was not in agreement with Dayton". However, in 1997, OHR finally took the position that a minimum level of jurisdiction should be had at the State level for the distribution of frequencies and for emitting public services. This idea was not immediately given its practical form. The international community wandered in its choice of solutions – from the idea that Entity televisions cooperate and in time establish a joint radio-television, to the establishment of an RTV corporation with varied jurisdiction, and finally, to the establishment of three public services (two Entity and one State), a corporation for telecommunication and a State regulatory agency.

It is important to note that the international experts engaged for the quick provision of proposals were mostly responsible for this wavering in the choice of solutions, as well as the responsible media functionaries and various supervisors and agents for reconstruction that were

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<sup>9</sup> A characteristic example is that of the "Oslobođenje" commentator A.S., whom the OSCE Commission for Media publicly censured in 1996 for a text in which he expressed public disagreement with the election of Momčilo Krajišnik in the B-H Presidency (Krajišnik is now accused for war crimes and is in the Hague). Or the case when TV B-H emitted the British documentary "Warriors" for which it was warned by the Independent Media Commission that the program "represents Croats in a bad light" prior to the elections.

replaced in OHR and other international organizations. All of this, together with the obstruction of local authorities and staff apathy in State electronic media, led to the breakdown of all reform deadlines. Jobs with 15, 30 and 90-day deadlines were sometimes extended to one to two years.

The Independent Media Commission is, to date, probably the most skilled international institution to be handed over to the local State organs. An additional valuable result, which no other international organization in B-H can boast of, was achieved by it: local staff which could successfully replace international experts and functionaries were trained. However, one fault in the work of the Commission is the fact that it has jurisdiction over establishing the rules and monitoring and sanctioning of violations of the rules. In other words, "the sheriff is also the judge." The working procedures are not transparent enough, and the appeal process ends in the Commission, without the right to appeal to a higher administrative or judicial body. This is a consequence of the Commission being outside the system; it was founded by OHR, but after that it formally answers to no one. Its incorporation into the Regulatory Agency for Telecommunication, which in time is to become a local institution, is its path into entering the organization of the B-H State.

#### **4. How and Where To from Here?**

Five years following Dayton, it can be concluded that the intervention of the international community was a complex and expensive action. It gave results, but not as much as was invested into the operation. An expensive and slow international bureaucracy implemented many projects routinely, without feeling for the specific characteristics, habits and all of the complexity of the situation here. Humanitarian aims were often veiled by the interest of organizations that implemented this support.

The international community itself is guilty for the absence of support of local political for media projects. It chose nationalist authorities for its partners. However, when they saw that there would be no agreement with these authorities, the international participants did not know how to find independent experts and institutions as support for their engagement, they did not always know how to identify the best local projects and the local implementers with the greatest prospects. Even though the human potential has been ravaged, there still are experts in B-H that are able to meet international standards and accept the transfer of new knowledge. International organizations often did not know how to identify such positive hot-spots. The same intervention scheme was applied in B-H as was in many other crisis areas in the world – with a mistrust of local capacities. Thus, instead of efforts to develop, as quickly as possible, a sustainable local media system that would be capable of planning and implementing its own development, there is instead a parallel system of international organizations and projects that are only as sustainable as the donor resources backing them. The absence of political will of local authorities to adopt modern media laws was replaced by protective measures of the international community. Now, under such imposed laws, B-H is approaching Europe, but for this reason the State is absolutely incapable of creating and monitoring the implementation of these laws on its own. Forgetting why they are in B-H borders on distastefulness and arrogance: even though these are organizations targeting local needs, officially they opt for English names and acronyms - IMC, OBN, FERN, PBS. The OHR Internet pages can only be found in English, and international organization press conferences were for a long time held without interpreters.

This text has not analyzed the effects of regional cooperation under the Stability Pact to date, since it is too soon for a serious evaluation. However, a number of comments can be made.

The spirit of the Stability Pact (Sarajevo, July 2000) did not absorb the media and international factors in B-H. The media mainly see it as a form of donor compensation for the interest lost for B-H, while the international participants in Sarajevo still do not see their activities within the context of regional cooperation, at least with regard to media. In fact, it is not known upon which principles and which schemes cooperation and development of regional projects can be carried out in the local media community. The international actors in Sarajevo, just like the local ones, did not do anything to introduce the "local" media and their associations into the Stability Pact sphere. Thus, it happened that proposals from B-H did not appear at the preliminary meetings of the Round Table for Democracy, while some were lost in the administration there. In the preliminary considerations, the Pact administration gave exclusive precedence to projects proposed by foreign organizations with bases in large European centers.

Not one single project that was originally developed in the regional countries was accepted. This decision was changed upon the stormy reaction from a number of countries.

How and where to go from here? The international community, to date, mostly did not consult local factors to assisting in providing an answer to this question. For the first time since Dayton, one international organization, Reporters without Borders, organized a colloquium (Lille, France, November 2000) at which the question about the scope of international intervention in the media sphere following B-H and Kosovo was posed to around ten local and foreign experts. It was concluded that no conclusions for Kosovo were made using the lessons (not) learned in B-H.

The coming years will be key years in creating a stable media environment in B-H. Either the transfer of responsibility for media development will become part of a systematic communication between international factors and the local community or there will occur a catastrophic breakdown of everything that was achieved over the past five years. The B-H State and its parts has to be trained to develop regulations in the spirit of European standards; international regulators' jurisdiction has to be transferred into the hands of local organs and local people, together with all political and legal guarantees that the transfer of jurisdiction will maintain and improve professionalism and free development of the media.

It is unacceptable for the international community to retreat suddenly, before completing its work. The decreased influx of donations has to be selectively targeted at the most successful projects, to which the market still does not offer enough chances to prove themselves. The increase of professionalism, education of journalists and managers, development of local organizations that deal with media research, development and education, have to remain priorities in the engagement of the international community. Support to establishment of new media has to be an absolute exception. It is essential that partnership, rather than subordinate, relations are created between foreign and local project implementers in order to enable a transfer of knowledge.

The local people have to take responsibility for the development of the media. They have to become the main basis for various media offices, commissions, boards and coordination, out of which the majority of foreigners has to slowly retreat. Bodies formed thus have to cooperate closely with local independent experts and media institutions that deal with development. The establishment of a State media commission, in accordance with the requests of the Stability Pact and the Charter on the Freedom of Media (June 2000) can be a path for the integration of knowledge and ability of foreign and local experts in the media field and creation of a serious development strategy.

It is necessary to produce a complex study of the strategic direction of media development in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The bearer of this study should be a competent local organization dealing with the media. Foreign experts, only in an advisory role, would be helpful in this effort. Following the completion of this study, it would be useful to plan an international conference that would also be organized by local institutions and experts.

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